

## ASHTON COAL OPERATIONS

### FINAL AND TEMPORARY REHABILITATION PRINCIPLES AND COMMITMENTS

#### Introduction

The nine coal producers of the Upper Hunter, through the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue have agreed to this set of principles and commitments with regard to final and temporary rehabilitation. The Principles and Commitments have been developed with advice and guidance from the UHMD Joint Working Group – Land Management which is a stakeholder and industry group.

The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue has two five year goals with regard to land management:

- *Goal 1 To decrease the time that disturbed areas are left without final or temporary cover, recognising that different mining operations are at different points in rehabilitation.*
- *Goal 2 To achieve a consistent level of best practice, quality, integrated rehabilitation – both within the industry and with future land uses - across the Upper Hunter and to be a responsible steward of the land.*

The primary focus of the Rehabilitation Principles and Commitments is to contribute to Goal 1. A number of other projects are underway to progress Goal 1. The industry participants in the UHMD acknowledge the importance of clear goals for rehabilitation developed through consultation with community and regulators, continuing to improve rehabilitation techniques and sharing innovative and successful rehabilitation techniques within the industry. Projects under Goal 2 focus on continuous improvement of rehabilitation practices.

#### Principles and Commitments

The Upper Hunter coal producers will publicly report against the Principles and Commitments on an annual basis. The reporting will be aggregated by the NSW Minerals Council and shared with the community. The table below sets out the six principles and provides a description of how each will be reported against.

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Reporting</b>
<b><i>Principle 1 – Include rehabilitation planning in mine planning</i></b>	<i>Narrative – how has this been done in the last period</i>
<i>Planning for rehabilitation should be integrated into the mine planning process and should include allocating adequate and dedicated resources to achieve the planned rehabilitation outcomes.</i>	<i>North East Open Cut Rehabilitation is in the maintenance phase. Annually Ashton has a rehabilitation monitoring report completed by a consultant advising of potential recommendations to improve the quality of the rehabilitation. Those recommendations are then reviewed and feasible recommendations are implemented.</i>
<b><i>Principle 2 – Undertake progressive rehabilitation</i></b>	<i>Narrative – how has this been implemented in the last twelve months</i>
<i>Companies should undertake rehabilitation progressively, with the objective of ensuring that rehabilitation is as close as possible to active mining.</i>	<i>North East Open Cut ceased operations in October 2011, the rehabilitation is in the maintenance phase.</i>

<p><b>Principle 3 – Minimise time that disturbed areas are left without vegetation</b></p>	<p><i>Narrative</i> – how has this been implemented in the last twelve months</p>
<p><i>Companies should actively seek to minimise the time that land is left without cover during mining. This should include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Taking steps to ensure that rehabilitation is commenced within 12 months of land becoming available for rehabilitation</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Utilising methods of temporary rehabilitation<sup>1</sup>, such as aerial seeding of over burden and other disturbed areas where permanent rehabilitation has not commenced.</i></li> </ul>	<p>The current disturbed areas are areas required for the Underground operations – infrastructure, tailings emplacement and water management areas.</p>
<p><b>Principle 4 – Prioritise areas of rehabilitation and temporary cover to reduce impacts</b></p>	<p><i>Narrative</i> – how has this been implemented in the last twelve months</p>
<p><i>Companies should prioritise rehabilitation and temporary cover in those areas where leaving land exposed will have the most impact. The following areas should be considered to have priority:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Areas that have the greatest impact on visual amenity, such as areas that face townships, residences, or the highway</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Areas that have the potential to generate dust leaving the site</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Areas that are important for biodiversity, such as rehabilitation adjoining or providing connectivity to remnant vegetation.</i></li> </ul>	<p>All available area for rehabilitation was completed by June 2012, 12 months ahead of schedule.</p>
<p><b>Principle 5 – Meet target for rehabilitation progress identified in the Mining Operations Plan</b></p>	<p><i>Quantitative</i> – report MOP target and actual rehabilitation</p> <p><i>Narrative</i> – explanation of performance</p>
<p><i>Each company should meet the annual target for rehabilitation quantity (area) set in the Mining Operations Plans for each of its mines.</i></p>	<p>All available area for rehabilitation was completed by June 2012, 12 months ahead of schedule.</p>
<p><b>Principle 6 – Set quality targets for rehabilitation in the Mining Operations Plan and implement a monitoring program to measure performance</b></p>	<p><i>Narrative</i> – summary of quality targets for the various rehabilitation types; and summary of monitoring program scope and status.</p>
<p><i>Each company should include quality targets for the various types of rehabilitation in the Mining Operations Plan for each of its mines. A monitoring program to measure the performance of rehabilitation areas against the quality targets should be implemented at each of its mines.</i></p>	<p>North East Open Cut Rehabilitation is in the maintenance phase. Annually Ashton has a rehabilitation monitoring report completed by a consultant advising of potential recommendations to improve the quality of the rehabilitation. Those recommendations are then reviewed and feasible recommendations are implemented.</p>

Ashton Coal's North East Open Cut (NEOC) ceased operations in October 2011. All available area for rehabilitation was completed by June 2012. NEOC rehabilitation is currently in maintenance phase. Maintenance activities include slashing of pasture areas, weed and pest animal control, legume species

<sup>1</sup> Temporary rehabilitation describes reshaping, revegetation and other rehabilitation techniques that are used for purposes other than final rehabilitation. This includes such initiatives as seeding overburden emplacement areas to reduce erosion, which are only temporary.

top dressed onto pasture areas and ecological flora and fauna reporting. The current disturbed areas are areas required for the Underground operations – infrastructure, tailings emplacement and water management areas.

The *Final And Temporary Rehabilitation Principles And Commitments* will be reviewed every three years. The guidance of the Joint Working Group – Land Management will be sought as part of the review of the Principles and Commitments.